



Lenin and the GOELRO Plan, by Pavel Filonov

Development Is Ours

Introduction to 10-part Course: "Development, Rural and Urban"

Some Relevant Quotations on "Development"

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Marx/Engels, Communist Manifesto, 1848

Communism = Soviet Power + Electrification

V I Lenin, 1921

*What we want is to combine in our process of inquiry the action of the forms of thought with a criticism of them. The forms of thought must be studied in their essential nature and complete **development**: they are at once the object of research and the action of that object. This is **Dialectic**, instead of being brought to bear upon the categories from without, it is immanent in their own action.*

G W F Hegel, Shorter Logic (1830)

"When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master, that's all."

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass, 1871

"The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"

Marx/Engels, Communist Manifesto, 1848

Development

“Development”, like many other powerful words, including “Freedom” and “Democracy”, had a meaning in revolutionary philosophy long before it had a vulgar bourgeois economists’ meaning.

Part of the purpose of our studies is therefore always, and with deliberation, to reclaim the political language that our revolutionary predecessors pioneered and left to us, and to take it back from the bourgeois demagogues who constantly try to steal it.

Development is the interior unfolding of a unitary phenomenon or system, propelled by the struggle of opposites within it. Development is the essence of dialectics. It is dialectics in motion. It is the essence of change. This revolutionary meaning of the word “development” is the only one that has a clear definition and an intentional purpose. It means the development of people.

The vulgar economists’ definition of the word “development” is a vague gesture in the direction of more infrastructure, lowering the cost of doing business, a higher GDP, and other such “indicators” or presumed generally-beneficial goods expediently selected to suit the occasion. In the US slang, it is “motherhood and apple pie”.

On grander occasions, the brandished indicators may be an internationally-endorsed set of arbitrary “development goals”, which, though globally celebrated, nevertheless fail to rise above the *ad hoc* and the eclectic, because they continue to evade the dialectical meaning of “development”.

The obfuscation of the word “development” is deliberate. This is because in actual human society, development is class struggle, with winners and losers. There is no such thing as a “win-win” class struggle. There is no such thing as a “tide that lifts all the boats”. Some of the boats are tied to the bottom.

Bourgeois economists, and Imperialism generally, although it has manifestly failed worldwide to employ even half of the people and to provide for them adequately, are obliged to pretend that there can be such a thing as generally-beneficial development that does not challenge the capitalist system.

Hence they have stolen our word and hidden its meaning, in an attempt to deceive us. We must take it back.

The picture is [Filonov](#)’s representation of Lenin and the ground-breaking “[GOELRO](#)” plan that included the electrification of the Soviet Union.



Reactionary Petty-Bourgeois Utopia

Petty-bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism, 1905, Lenin

Lenin's "[Petty Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism](#)" is an example of Lenin's antipathy towards "reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia". Like Frederick Engels, Lenin opposed the liberal view of emancipation, whereby the worker's household is re-constituted as a miniature image of the bourgeois household.

The word "development" is not used in Lenin's article. But clearly, Lenin is looking at a situation wherein "development" in our vulgar, modern sense is very much on the agenda, i.e.: The masses are poor, so something must be done.

Lenin points out the class realities: *"Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords do away with commodity production? No, it will not."*

"...after destroying the power of the bureaucracy and the landlords, it will set up a democratic system of society, without, however, altering the bourgeois foundation of that democratic society, without abolishing the rule of capital."

Lenin, already in 1905, 15 years before he launched the concept of the National Democratic Revolution (in the report-back of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question to the Second Congress of the Communist international in 1920) had fully grasped the necessity of such an NDR and its close relationship to the trajectory of social development in its full, dialectical sense. He writes:

"Can a class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that he understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty."

But Lenin refuses to allow the revolution to ossify into any sort of equivalent to the idea of a static, perpetual “National Democratic Society”. He says:

*“The peasants' struggle against the landlords is now a revolutionary struggle; the confiscation of the landlords' estates at the present stage of economic and political evolution is revolutionary in every respect, and we back this revolutionary-democratic measure. However, to call this measure “socialisation”, and to deceive oneself and the people concerning the possibility of “equality” in land tenure under the system of commodity production, is a **reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia**, which we leave to the socialist-reactionaries.”*

What is a reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia? The illustration above, a German Nazi poster dating from about 25 years after Lenin wrote the linked article, expresses the full picture: a reconstruction and development programme that presents itself as purely utilitarian and even innocent. The progress that it offers is also offered as the end of all progress. This is the kind of thing that Paulo Freire referred to as “necrophilia”.

Please download the document, read it and appreciate the extraordinary clarity and foresight that Lenin was able to achieve, aged 35, in 1905, and how much of it rings true even today.

Development, Part 3



Local Class Alliance

Reform or Revolution?, Chapters 2, 7, 9 and 10, Luxemburg, Part 1

The politics of class alliance are well understood and well executed at national level in South Africa in terms of the **National Democratic Revolution** (NDR) policy developed during the last nine decades, which led directly to the democratic breakthrough of 1994.

The NDR remains the dominant framework of South African politics, having been refreshed at Polokwane in 2007. At national level, the interests of the working class continue to be well articulated through the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the trade union movement whose largest centre is COSATU.

The petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, has no dedicated political expression at national level, and nor has the peasantry. In spite of the large size of these segments of the population in South Africa, they are compelled to rely on others, at national level. This is a consequence of the “sack-of-potatoes” nature of both of these two classes: the rural petty-bourgeois who are the peasants; and the urban peasants, who are the petty-bourgeoisie.

Both these classes are made up of individualists who aspire to live autonomously as families, with everything of their own. The working class is compelled to represent the interests of these mostly extremely poor sections of the population at national level. Otherwise, the established big bourgeoisie would quickly exploit the poorer ones as political foot-soldiers for capitalism, or possibly for demagogic fascism.

The monopolists also, in practice, exploit the peasants and the petty bourgeois directly, feeding off their younger brothers and sisters in the predatory way which Rosa Luxemburg described so well in Chapter 2 of [“Reform or Revolution?”](#).

Local class politics

But at local level, in South Africa, the situation of the working-class vis-à-vis the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry is reversed. The organised working class has hardly any formal presence either at electoral ward level (where ANC branches are organised), or at voting district level. Here the petty-bourgeois individualists are working on their home ground and at the scale of their own business operations. COSATU Locals and Socialist Forums are in the shade, if they exist at all.

The SACP generates cadres, and organises and assists the masses, including the ANC, in many different ways, but it has not stood candidates in elections for many years. Whether its electoral practice changes, or not, the SACP is attempting to make a major impact at local level when the entire party is re-organised into Voting-District-based branches. See especially from page 13, second last paragraph, for Luxemburg’s understanding of the relationship between the Bourgeoisie and the class that it predated upon, which is the petty-bourgeoisie.



Housing by People

Housing by People, C1, Who Decides?, John Turner

[Housing by People](#) (excerpts attached), by John Charlewood Turner, is a discussion of housing, from a well-educated point of view, and of where decisive power should lie, who should act, and how all these responsibilities should be divided up.

Turner's book can serve us as a small link to the great, beautiful and necessary field of study called urbanism, of which very little emerges into the general public realm. Urbanism is a site of ideological struggle. It is also a labyrinth, in which it is easy to get lost. Turner, as you will see, refers to "*the mirage of development*"; meaning the *illusion* of development.

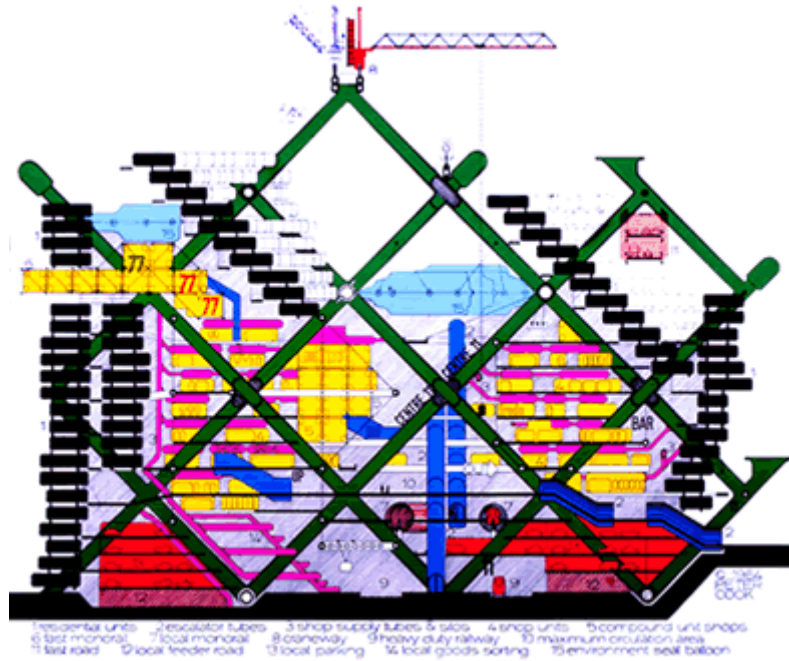
Turner's focus in the chapters given here is on autonomy versus heteronomy. It is a question of who decides, he says. In short, he is in favour of Power to the People.

Turner is undoubtedly a partisan of the poor petty-bourgeoisie, and is a very clear-minded student of, and exponent of, their needs.

For the partisans of the working class, Turner's guidelines are therefore invaluable. They provide insight into the world of a class that is quite different from the proletariat. The two classes are very close in time and space, even as close as to be co-existent in the same biological families; yet their needs and outlooks are different.

Predecessors to Turner in this urban-studies tradition have been [Patrick Geddes](#), [Lewis Mumford](#), and [Ebenezer Howard](#).

The illustration shows Howard's famous diagram "The Three Magnets", from his 1902 book "Garden Cities of To-morrow".



Design is Politics

Thinking out of the matchbox, Glen Mills, Business Day

Glen Mills' excellent, short, 2006 Business Day article "Thinking out of the matchbox" (**attached**) briefly summarises the general situation in South African housing, which has not changed much since then.

There is still no public discussion of design, except at the "Top Billing" level of snobbery and eclecticism, or otherwise at the level of the most banal, hopeless utilitarianism.

Mills' article brings in the vital question of design. His argument is true, and tragic. Design is the politics and the propaganda of the eye, and the enabler of freedom. It is the politics that is lived in, as opposed to being merely read or spoken.

Design is terribly impoverished in South Africa. This part of our politics has been neglected.

Today, 30 January 2012, Glen Mills has published another article in Business Day. It will be posted to the forum separately, but we can use it as part of the same debate on design and urbanism, which as much as ever, needs to be pursued towards a political conclusion.

In the next part, we look at the rural side of things.

Image: "[Plug-In City](#)"



The nationalisation of land

Abolition of Landed Property, 1869, Marx

If “Land to the tiller” is a revolutionary slogan that will motivate our allies the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie, then what about: “Nationalise the land”?

These things are not the same. The petty-bourgeois republic is not the same as Karl Marx’s dream of “*National centralization of the means of production*”, which Marx here associates with the ultimate moves in the transition to communism (i.e. the “withering away of the state”).

In the short, 3-page letter to Mr Applegarth, Marx writes:

"The future will decide that the land cannot be owned but nationally. To give up the soil to the hands of associated rural laborers would be to surrender all society to one exclusive class of producers. The nationalization of land will work a complete change in the relations between labor and capital and finally do away altogether with capitalist production, whether industrial or rural. Only then the class distinctions and privileges will disappear together with the economical basis from which they originate and society will be transformed into an association of 'producers'. To live upon other people's labor will become a thing of the past. There will no longer exist a government nor a state distinct from society itself."

In the alliance of worker and peasant that must be made for the purposes of overthrowing the rule of the big bourgeoisie, the demand of the peasants is for ownership of land.

Yet Marx, already, in 1869, is clear in his mind that the distribution of land to the peasants makes a situation that *"is farther off the nationalization of land than... landlordism"* and *"converts the tiller himself into the most decided enemy of all social progress, and above all, of the nationalization of the land"*.

Such problems arose in the Soviet Union after the revolution, following which "collectivisation" took place by force.

In China things were done differently. There, the peasant class was given land and nursed for generations, and it is still the majority class in China, although hundreds of millions have been drawn off the land and into the cities to create what is now by far the largest national working proletariat that the world has ever seen, in the hundreds of millions.



What Marx calls in this letter *"appliance of modern agricultural improvements"*, and which he thought were excluded from use by peasant farmers, were redesigned and manufactured in China at a suitable scale for peasant use (e.g. the Chinese walking tractor). Even with such mechanical implements, peasant progress was slow, as it can only be slow. Yet the transformation of China has been as relentless as it has been systematic.

Illustration (Poster): *"As a result of state-farm and collective-farm construction the USSR became the country of the most powerful agriculture in the world."* (1931)

Second Illustration: Chinese walking tractor, designed for peasant family farming.



Education, key to development

Speech to Adult Educationalists at 3rd All-Russian Conference, 1920, Lenin

Lenin's short 1920 speech to adult educators starts with some paragraphs about the war situation. This was a little more than two years after the Great October 1917 Russian Revolution, and in the mean time there had been counter-revolutionary uprisings and military interventions from the capitalist powers, including Great Britain. These can serve to remind us what an enormous effort had to be made just to obtain sufficient peace to start building the USSR.

In the remaining page or so of this typically powerful summing up by Lenin can be read his view of the relationship between education, development of industrial productive forces (including electrification), and the emancipation of the peasants from poverty and backward material conditions.

Says Lenin:

[We] "...will go to the peasants with a practical, businesslike and clear-cut plan for the reconstruction of all industry and will demonstrate that with education at its present level the peasant and the worker will not be able to carry out this task and will not escape from filth, poverty, typhus and disease.

"This practical task is clearly connected with cultural and educational improvements and must serve as the central point around which we must group all our Party propaganda and activities, all our school and extra-mural teaching.

*"This will help to get a sound grasp of the most urgent interests of the peasant masses and will **link up the general improvement in culture and knowledge with burning economic requirements** to such an extent that we shall increase a hundredfold the demand of the working-class masses for education."*

We, too, must link up the general improvement in culture and knowledge with burning economic requirements. This is the reason for our studies.

Image (Poster): "Do you help to liquidate illiteracy?" (USSR, 1925)



Co-Operatives or Protégés?

Critique of the Gotha Programme, Marx , Part 1

The classic literature on co-operatives divides into two parts, characterised **first** by Marx's, Engels' and Lenin's disdain for co-ops under the bourgeois dictatorship, and **second** by Lenin's embracing of co-ops as the sufficient and necessary means, under proletarian rule, of uniting the town and the country and of effecting a transition, for the proletarian and non-proletarian masses together, into socialism.

For South Africans this poses theoretical problems.

We cannot just ignore what the classics say about co-ops under capitalism, not because they are "classics", but also because the arguments are strong, and because ours is still a bourgeois state. Therefore the arguments that Marx makes in "The Critique of the Gotha Programme", for example, still apply to us.

Yet we appear to need the opportunity, that co-ops seem to provide, of socialising fragmented and incomplete individual efforts, or in other words of organising the unorganised peasantry, petty-bourgeoisie, and more generally, those whom capitalism has failed to employ.

In the light of these considerations, let us look at some of what Karl Marx said about co-operatives on pages 4, 5, 6 and 9 of "The Critique of the Gotha Programme". Most of it is scathing. The best that Marx can manage to say for co-ops is:

"That the workers desire to establish the conditions for co-operative production on a social scale, and first of all on a national scale, in their own country, only means that they are working to revolutionize the present conditions of production, and it has nothing in common with the foundation of co-operative societies with state aid. But as far as the present co-operative societies are concerned, they are of value only insofar as they are the independent creations of the workers and not protégés either of the governments or of the bourgeois."

Prior to the above he remarks (about the Gotha Programme):

“Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democrats) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution.”

The co-operation that is patronised by the state, and also state distribution (i.e. what we now call “delivery”) is only “vulgar socialism”, says Marx.

The Critique of the Gotha Programme is not a long document (though it is very rich). Please try to read it. It is invaluable for many purposes, and not just for this question of co-ops.

Illustration: Sewing Co-operative, Rwanda, 2009

Development, Part 5a



Lenin: Co-ops work under the working class

On Co-operation, Lenin

The main item today is Lenin’s “On Co-operation”, a short but very rich and extraordinary document written in January 1923. Lenin suffered his third and last stroke in March of that year, from which he did not recover, dying in January, 1924. This short text is therefore among his last works.

Writing in post-revolutionary conditions, Lenin briefly acknowledges the criticism that had been heaped upon co-ops under the bourgeois dictatorship: *“There is a lot of fantasy in the dreams of the old co-operators. Often they are ridiculously fantastic,”* he says.

Following which he proceeds to place an extremely high value on co-operatives, in the new conditions, as being almost the most important component of the advance to full socialism, saying: *“since political power is in the hands of the working-class, since this political power owns all the means of production, the only task, indeed, that remains for us is to organize the population in co-operative societies.”*

We can note that in this article Lenin anticipates at least one or two decades of further life of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which allowed bourgeois activity under proletarian state power.

What actually happened was that within about four years after Lenin's death the NEP had been reversed and the policy of the Soviet Union had become one of large-scale five-year plans, only. The centralisation of the economy, started under Lenin as complementary to the NEP, had in effect become treated as an either/or mutually exclusive alternative to it.

Is this a necessary dichotomy? In South Africa, we will at some stage have to decide. So far, since the democratic breakthrough of 1994 South African governments have encouraged all kinds of employment, and small business development, including encouragement of co-operatives that has been rather nominal. In that context, note what Lenin says about the NEP: that it made the mistake of neglecting co-operatives.

This short article of Lenin's on co-operation ranges more widely than simply on co-ops as such. Particularly interesting are the concluding paragraphs of Part 2 of the document, where Lenin refers to a "cultural revolution".

In the penultimate paragraph of Part 1, Lenin had written:

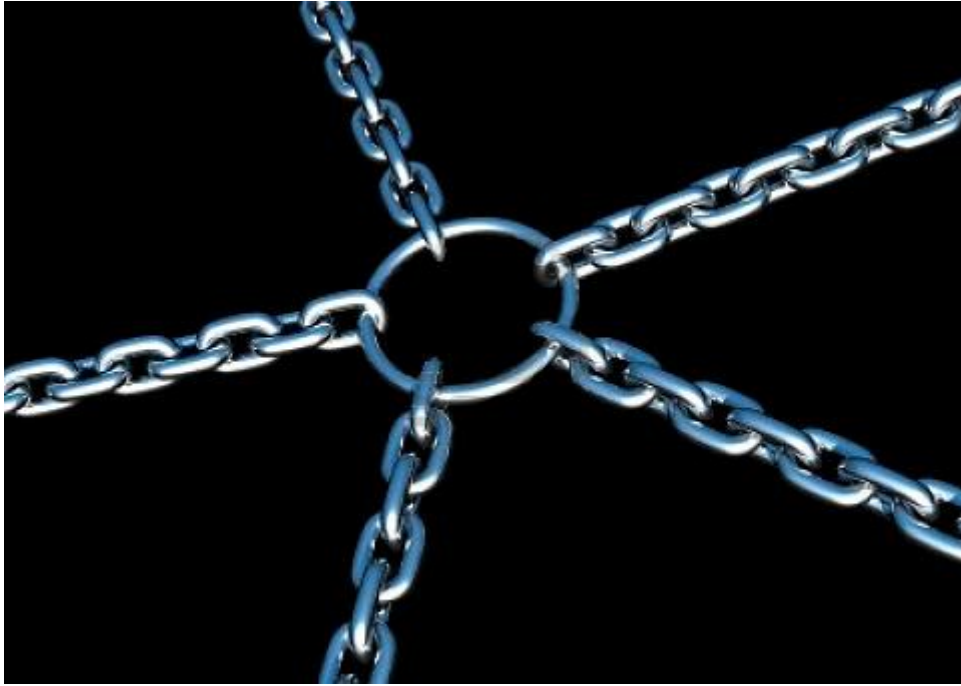
"By ability to be a trader I mean the ability to be a cultured trader. Let those Russians, or peasants, who imagine that since they trade they are good traders, get that well into their heads. This does not follow that all. They do trade, but that is far from being cultured traders. They now trade in an Asiatic manner, but to be a good trader one must trade in the European manner. They are a whole epoch behind in that."

The difference that Lenin refers to as between "Asiatic" and "European" trading is the difference between production for sale without having secured a market, and on the other hand, production for a known market, or for a previously-identified demand. We will pursue this question in relation to the next item, on "entrepreneurship".

In Part 2, Lenin re-states the difference between pre- and post-revolutionary co-ops, saying: *"...we are right in regarding as entirely fantastic this 'co-operative' socialism, and as romantic, and even banal, the dream of transforming class enemies into class collaborators and class war into class peace (so-called class truce) by merely organizing the population in cooperative societies."*

"...But see how things have changed now that the political power is in the hands of the working-class, now that the political power of the exploiters is overthrown..."

Illustration: Selling Surplus Grain Crops at the Office of the People's Co-operative, Wang Qi, People's Republic of China, 1953



Entrepreneurship

Dismissing Myths and Misunderstandings of Entrepreneurship, Morris

In the [Umsebenzi Online of 30 June 2010](#), SACP GS Dr Blade Nzimande wrote that we must **“Fight Tenderpreneurs to defend entrepreneurship!!”**

The GS wrote: *“Entrepreneurs, found in co-operatives, small and medium sized businesses, are all those who genuinely and honestly go about doing business, including tendering for government work.”*

The **attached** item today is a short article of Professor Michael Morris’s, published in 1996 in the Business Day, which debunked a number of misconceptions about so-called “entrepreneurship”.

Morris wrote, among other things, that: *“The entrepreneurial individual recognises a trend, a possibility, an unmet demand. He or she comes up with a concept for capitalising on the trend or demand and does so while the window of opportunity is open.”*

This is the same point as Lenin is making. Lenin knew that the setting up of producer co-operatives without attention to their markets would be a disastrous waste.

Morris also says: *“Entrepreneurial individuals are opportunity-driven, not resource-driven.”* This may be the truest of the many true things that Morris noticed about entrepreneurs.

Business is driven by the customer. It is not true, as Jean-Baptiste Say used to believe, that supply creates its own demand. The entrepreneur’s job is to identify demand, where demand means people wanting goods or services, and ready and willing to pay for them promptly and at a price that will ensure a profit to the entrepreneur.

Most co-ops in South Africa are set up in what Lenin referred to as the “Asiatic manner”, expecting to produce first and sell later. Whereas, as Lenin pointed out, to be a good co-operator one must be what he called a “cultured trader”. Above all, this means securing the demand before you make (or buy) and supply. The entrepreneur is a trader, and a cultured trader.

A great deal follows from that, and these are the considerations that define the world around the co-operatives, small and medium sized businesses that Dr Blade Nzimande referred to. Most of these considerations are obscured or downright lied-about in capitalist literature. Morris’s short article is a rare example of relative candour in the business press, which makes it very well worth reading.

The market is crucial, but contrary to what the bourgeois ideologues keep on saying, the market is not free or open. It is we, the opponents of monopoly capitalism, who are the true “free-marketeers”. Small businesses, including co-ops, to survive, must have access to markets that are not dominated by predatory monopolistic market manipulators; and if they are selling to the state, they must be paid on time and in full. These conditions hardly exist in South Africa, which has historically been monopolistic in the extreme, and whose government, on the other hand, is a notoriously slow payer.

The Chinese delegation that visited South Africa in 2009 told us that the Chinese peasants are guaranteed a market by the state, at the same price that private buyers are prepared to pay.

South Africa will also have to pay attention to the question of the market for peasant, petty-bourgeois, and co-operative production, as well as to the subjective, exhortative, educational contribution, which is so clear in Lenin’s approach and which he explicitly recommends.

Even if it may not always be a matter of the state setting up co-ops, yet the mass social development of peasants and petty-bourgeois is always going to be a matter of educating, organising, and mobilising. Paradoxically, and for this reason, the petty-bourgeoisie needs the communists.

Illustration: “Entrepreneur” means one who “holds together”, as the ring in the picture holds together the chains. Most especially the business entrepreneur holds together demand and supply.



From the NEP Russia will come the Socialist Russia!

Plenary Session of Moscow Soviet, Speech re NEP, Lenin

The short speech to the Moscow Soviet in November 1922 gives more of the background and history of the NEP.

There is so much that is strong from Lenin, and it ranges so widely, that it is difficult to keep in mind that after the October 1917 revolution he only had four years of relatively good health, and that was interrupted by the assassination attempt of August 1918. During 1922 and 1923 he was mostly ill and he died in January 1924.

Therefore Lenin's direct leadership of the policy that he, more than any other, is associated with - namely the New Economic Policy or NEP - only went for about a year from its beginning, which was in March, 1921.

The NEP was abandoned in favour of collectivisation and full central planning in 1928, under the leadership of J V Stalin.



As can be seen in the last paragraph of this speech of Lenin's, he intended "that NEP Russia will become socialist Russia." This phrase is echoed in the translation given on the Internet for the slogan in Russian on the NEP poster (above). The other image is of a peasant produce market held during the NEP.

How the transition to socialism was to take place or exactly what it meant in Lenin's mind is a matter of study. We will continue this study with the next of these three items on the NEP.



Sao Paulo, Brazil

Development is Class Struggle

The Brutal Side of Capitalist Development, Moore

David Moore's article "The Brutal Side of Capitalist Development" appeared in the now-defunct Johannesburg newspaper "ThisDay" in 2004, as an "op-ed" feature.

At the time, at the height of the Mbeki Presidency, the article was remarkable in the mainstream South African media for being frank about the class struggle. Most of such material one would read at that time, in the depths of the 1996 Class Project years, was of the one-eyed "Development Studies" variety.

Moore only had to say how dull and derivative all this other material had been, to win the case unarguably.

The dispute between "neo-liberal GEARs and social-welfarist RDPs" is a sterile one, he says. Like a new broom, Moore swept away all the "happy synergistic tales", while reminding people of "capitalism's brutal genesis" and also its saving grace, the "vibrantly emerging working classes."

The document is a nice, short read, though packed with hints and pointers. Now in 2012, seven years later, there is continuing talk of a "developmental state" and perhaps an implied assumption that what we already have is that very "developmental state". Yet the diverse origins of "developmentalism" have hardly been re-examined. Hence the other, longer documents that will be introduced this week, for the sake of completeness. But this article of David Moore's will be more than adequate as a discussion text.

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" wrote Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, meaning that the entire historical development of humanity had been driven by the dynamic of class struggle. It still is being driven by class struggle.



Industrial Policy Action Plan

National Assembly Statement on IPAP2 by Dr Rob Davies, 2010

On 18 February 2010 South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies introduced "IPAP2" in a speech to the, National Assembly, now a 4-page document (download linked below). Introducing the Plan, he wrote:

"As a country, South Africa has no alternative to the course of action we propose. Manufacturing and other productive sectors of the economy are the engines of long-term sustainable growth and job creation in developing countries such as our own."

The full 2010/11 – 2012/13 Industrial Policy Action Plan (4-part PDF) is at:

<http://www.thedti.gov.za/ipap/ipap.htm>

This is the Industrial Policy document that Polokwane promised.

Towards the end of the introductory document Dr Davies writes

"It is estimated that the IPAP will result in the creation of 2 477 000 direct and indirect decent jobs over the next ten years. It will diversify and grow exports, improve the trade balance, build long term industrial capability, grow our domestic technology and catalyse skills development."

This is the kind of good work that puts empirical meaning into the term "developmental state".

Image: Dr Rob Davies. Cde Davies is also a member of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party.



[Ebrahim Patel](#)

The New Growth Path

The New Growth Path Framework, 2010

Download the NGP Framework at <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=135748>
[36 pages, PDF]

On 23 November 2010 South Africa's Minister of Economic Development Ebrahim Patel introduced "**The New Growth Path**" (NGP). His **four-page introduction** is **attached**.

Minister of Trade and Industry Rob Davies had issued the 2010/11 – 2012/13 "**Industrial Policy Action Plan**" ("IPAP2") earlier in the same year (18 February 2010), as we noted yesterday.

On 30 April 2010 the 24 members of the National Planning Commission were appointed, with an expectation that they would work publicly and transparently to produce a 25-year **National Strategic Plan** and/or a 5-year **Medium Term Strategic Framework** within one year, with subsequent annual updates.

The last to publish their projections was the National Planning Commission, not counting the two earlier and quite instructive Green Papers published by the National Planning Minister and Commission Chair, Trevor Manuel, which have already been sent out in this part. We will return to the draft National Development Plan in the next part of the course.

Three streams

How can the Communist University in particular cope with three different streams of documents from three different ministers, on development?

With or without the appointed National Planning Commission's first full attempt at planning, it is bound to be difficult for anyone to synthesise these three sources and come up with a concretised description of South Africa's new post-Polokwane development plans in total.



GOELRO Plan document, 1920

The struggle continues.

And the others?

The ANC Youth League and the Young Communist League have briefly noted the New Growth Path, and both have promised to comment upon it further.

The ANC YL has tended to treat the question of development entirely as a matter of nationalisation and redistribution of the “cake”.

The SACP has broadly welcomed the New Growth Path, and before it the IPAP2. The Party is anxious to see how any wage-subsidy would be safeguarded against potential forms of abuse.

COSATU has some criticisms; we will return to COSATU in the next part of this course.

Image: [Ebrahim Patel](#); [GOELRO Plan](#) document, 1920.



National Plan

SA Government Green Paper on National Strategic Planning, Part 2

The 40-page Green Paper on National Strategic Planning (**attached**) is a discussion document, but its release in September 2009 was followed by complaints. COSATU's General Secretary lambasted it. NEHAWU lambasted it because it was drafted and issued by the South African government, not the National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance. NEHAWU wrote:

"It is a known fact that the need for a high level planning and the planning commission and other modalities towards the establishment of the developmental state were agreed upon at the Alliance summit in October 2008.

"NEHAWU therefore believes that it is only proper that the Green Paper should be considered in the impending Alliance summit and that this should take place prior to further processes in parliament and government."

One of this Green Paper's merits was that it made a strong case for regular central planning on three "time horizons": 1-year Programmes of Action, 5-year Medium Term "Frameworks" corresponding to a maximum term of office between elections; and Long-Term, plus/minus 15-year, "Visions".

It makes this case in common-sense or bourgeois-bureaucratic terms but it does not compromise with neo-liberal *laissez-faire* (French for "leave alone"). With this Green Paper, the necessity for planning (*dirigisme* or "steering" in French) became orthodoxy in South Africa.

The first National Strategic Planning Green Paper

This first Planning Green Paper was not itself a plan. It committed the Minister to produce the first national plan within a year (which took longer). It laid down the process by which the planning would be done – centrally, of course, but transparently, and not secretly or pre-emptively.

The major de-merit of the Green Paper from a communist point of view is shown by its frequent mention of something resembling an imaginary table of weaknesses and problems. In this list you find

women, children, the disabled and the old, and those with low “social status”- meaning the working class. Race, gender and lack of education are mentioned, but never “class”, or the “working class”. Instead, where race is mentioned you get more (balancing?) remarks about low “social status”, as if being working class and/or black is a disability or a disease that needs to be palliated, treated or cured.

The class struggle may be the engine of history, the Green Paper seems to imply, but it can't be considered in plans. The plans imagined in the Green Paper will be curative courses of treatment for ills. If this remains unchanged, then the strategic plans produced by the process described are bound to fall far short of what is necessary.

Class formation

The historical measure of change and of progress is the rate of class formation. The basis of Chinese revolutionary planning success in the last sixty years, for example, has been their constant attention to class formation. Even their few, now-long-past failures were a consequence of the same, correct, focus.

None of the goods, whether public or private, that the planning process is designed to maximise will be secure unless there is a steady and eventually overwhelming growth of the working class. By treating the working class as a “social status” problem, the Green Paper has the whole matter upside down, and will fail, if it does not get corrected.

Without any positive class orientation, the planning process as outlined in the Green Paper will default back to conservative bourgeois utilitarianism. The determination towards planning that the Green Paper represents is a great leap forward, but it will come to nothing if the planning process is not infused with revolutionary class-consciousness. This is a job for the communists.

There is a great deal inside the Green Paper about protocol and government etiquette. Whether these things are really crucial will become apparent. We now have the “IPAP2” and the “New Growth Path” (NGP). How these other two planning exercises will correspond with the eventual National Plan is something we will have to wait to see.

Our graphic, above, representing communist planning, is the symbol of the former German Democratic Republic, which was in its time a good friend to South Africa.

In the next post we will contrast and compare the revised and much shorter Green Paper that arrived in January, 2010 and was executed. The commissioners were appointed on 30 April 2010, and have now produced a draft which is being discussed.
